

**RIO DELL CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION
FEBRUARY 23, 2010
MINUTES**

A Special Meeting of the Rio Dell City Council was called to order at 5:07 P.M. by Mayor Woodall.

ROLL CALL: Present: Mayor Woodall, Councilmembers Barsanti, Dunker, Marks, and Thompson

Others Present: Interim City Manager Stretch, Chief of Police Hill, Finance Director Beauchaine, Acting Director of Public Works Jensen, City Clerk Dunham, and Assistant Contract City Engineer Merritt Perry

SPECIAL MEETING MATTERS/PUBLIC HEARINGS

Review Wildwood Ave. Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvements and Transportation Enhancement Application for Funding

Interim City Manager Stretch stated the purpose of the discussion is to address such things as the parking configuration, medians and striping associated with the Wildwood Ave. Improvement Project and make amendments to the Transportation Enhancement (TE) application if necessary.

Assistant City Engineer Merritt Perry explained there were essentially two basic projects for the Wildwood Ave. Improvement Project; the first project totaling \$800,000 (\$576,00 in ARRA Funding and \$224,000 from Prop 1-B) for the resurfacing Wildwood Ave. from Side St. to the Eagle Prairie Bridge including ADA improvements. The second project totaling \$589,000 under the Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding would include pedestrian and streetscape improvements on Wildwood Avenue between Douglas St. and the Eagle Prairie Bridge including bulb-outs, pedestrian refuge, medians, gateway sign, planting strips or boxes, tree planting, replacement of unused driveways with sidewalk, re-configuration of parking and striping to enhance the downtown and allow for safe passage of bicyclists, street lighting and other related improvements such as street furniture. He said the Council had discussed the possibility of implementing diagonal parking and as a result of that discussion, some diagonal parking was included in the concept drawings submitted with the TE application along with other general ideas as part of the proposed downtown improvements. He explained these drawing were only concept drawings and once the application is approved, they would come back with an actual plan. He went on to explain that on January 28, 2010, the City received authorization to proceed with the first phase (paving and ADA improvements) of the project and would be advertising for bids in March with award of the contract in April. In regard to the second phase of the project, he noted the funding would not be released until the 2011-2012 budget year due to the State budget problems which would put the construction out to 2012 or 2013. He said this would allow for sufficient time to come up with a well thought out plan for the beautification/enhancement of the downtown.

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Councilmember Marks asked if striping and diagonal parking would be included with the paving of Wildwood Ave.. Merritt Perry said if it is the Council's desire to include diagonal parking now, they could work with staff and come up with a re-configuration of the design with potential use of Prop 1-B funds or other City funds. He noted they would have to develop a concept for truck parking for deliveries and look at the circulation pattern of the City which could be a safety issue. He pointed out that although basic striping would need to be done with the paving, the cost would be relatively inexpensive and could easily be redone with the additional enhancements under the next project.

Councilmember Thompson had questions regarding the bike lanes and if bike lanes would reduce the number of parking spaces; Merritt Perry said there would actually be more parking spaces.

Councilmember Marks commented that there is not currently a high volume of delivery trucks delivering to the downtown businesses and asked if it was necessary to keep the center lane on Wildwood Ave.; Merritt Perry said there would be a lot of trade-off's with the inclusion of a median strip and said one thing to consider may be a smaller median.

Merritt Perry said the question is whether the Council wants to step up and make the decision to redesign the plan for the Wildwood Ave. improvements now or wait until TE funds are released in the next couple of years.

Finance Director Beauchaine questioned the cost estimate for the additional improvements and the involvement of business owners and said in theory the City has already allocated TE funds for the project which won't become available 2011 or 2012 and to do additional work now would possibly necessitate the use of reserves. Merritt Perry said one option would be to have a preliminary meeting with the business owners to hear their thoughts on the proposed improvements.

Councilmember Dunker asked if areas for potential parking lots had been explored; Merritt Perry said they had not been considered.

Councilmember Marks commented that diagonal parking and a median would add texture to the downtown, slow traffic and give the downtown more of a quaint appeal.

Merritt Perry said the idea would be to convey a sense of arrival to downtown, establish a positive image, reinforce community identity, promote pedestrian or vehicular safety, support the redevelopment effort in the downtown area, and establish the design tone for streetscape improvements for future streetscape projects in Rio Dell. He noted that stamped or textured sidewalks would also provide texture and promote a good feel for the downtown.

Mayor Woodall said that she personally would like to wait and come up with alternative improvements during the design process rather than put in diagonal parking now.

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Councilmember Barsanti asked what the actual time line was between the two projects; Merritt estimated between 2 ½ and 3 years.

Council expressed concern about compromising the new paving with removal of the striping during the next phase of the project; Merritt Perry pointed out that the striping could be done with paint rather than thermo-plastic for easier removal when the time comes.

Councilmember Barsanti suggested the Council consider just painting crosswalks and using stick-on reflectors during this portion of the project and putting the funding allocated for the remaining striping aside for the next project so as not diminish the integrity of the project by having blocked out and ground out areas in the pavement. Merritt Perry noted in looking at various concepts, ways to mitigate that problem were addressed.

Interim City Manager Stretch stated it is inevitable that when you have two projects that are not on the same schedule there will be some mitigating factors to resolve.

Merritt Perry noted that everyone including the public is going to want a high comfort level with this project and said a grass median may not necessarily be the best solution in all areas of the downtown. During the design process, the City has the ideal opportunity to present various options to establish how they want the downtown to look.

Councilmember Dunker commented that a center median and bulb-outs would give the impression of narrowing the roadway and would slow down traffic.

Councilmember Thompson asked how far back Winzler & Kelly was involved in the design of the downtown and asked when the parking was changed from diagonal to parallel; Merritt Perry stated they had the original "as built" from Cal-Trans which he could share with the City if desired.

Councilmember Barsanti said he had a cousin who was previously taking design classes at Humboldt State University and one of the class assignments was to produce conceptual drawings of downtown Rio Dell which he did, and wondered if they were still in the possession of the City. Merritt Perry said he was unaware of those drawing but noted Winzler & Kelly had planners and employees in their drafting department who could produce concept drawings. Councilmember Barsanti said he thought the City should take the opportunity and come up with conceptual drawings and make an informed decision.

Consensus of the Council was to proceed with the Wildwood Avenue Improvement Project as outlined with the inclusion of temporary striping then to follow up with study sessions with the public to discuss the additional improvements.

Review City Council Short Term Goals and Objectives and Prioritize Work List for Interim City Manager

Mayor Woodall began by identifying eight items on the list of Short Term Goals that the City Manager determined subsequent to the February 9, 2010 study session to be administrative matters that should be removed from the list as follows:

- Junk Yard on Center St.
- Illegal Drug Activity
- 1-hour Parking on Center St.
- City Hall Roof Repair/Maintenance
- Training for New City Council Members
- Repair/Renovation of Restrooms at Tennis Courts
- Davis St. Public Access
- Gate on Edwards Dr.

Interim City Manager Stretch explained that he took the liberty of marking in yellow the items included in the staff report of things he felt he would be able to accomplish before leaving his interim employment with the City. The items were as follows:

- Negotiate employment agreement with new City Manager
- Negotiate property acquisitions (2) for wastewater system Type II Irrigation Site
- Major role in LAFCo application proves and discussion with Scotia representatives re: annexation
- Complete MOU negotiations with Rio Dell Employees' Association including PERS retirement benefit
- Negotiate new MOU with Rio Dell Police Officers Association re: PERS retirement benefit
- Draft new job description for Public Works Director and recruit
- Draft new Business License Ordinance
- Complete work on Surplus Property Ordinance

He further reviewed the other items as identified and said that Item 4 regarding taking the lead in a Economic Development analysis and Item 5 to define an Economic Program for the City were things that he would not be able to complete although felt they were very important. He said both Items 6 and 7 (MOU Negotiations with both employee groups) were almost complete. Referring to the new job description for the Public Works Director, he said the idea is to take a hard look at the position and how it would impact the City financially to weave in the position of Civil Engineer; his thought was that it would save the City money overall.

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He further stated that he hoped to be able to work on Item 9 (analyze City organizational needs for purpose of augmenting management staff) before arrival of the new City Manager noting that although the new City Manager will be very capable, we were still in need of additional support staff in spite of having limited space at City Hall.

In regard to Item 10 to coordinate job description reviews with Cooperative Personnel Services for all job classifications, he said that was also important to complete since employees were most likely working out of their respective classifications. He noted it would be helpful to see how each job fits into the grid.

Item 11 (Business License Ordinance Update) and Item 12 (Surplus Property Ordinance Update) he said were almost complete.

In regard to Item 15 (Wastewater System Rate Review) he noted that Councilmember Thompson had presented to him an idea for implementing small steps for wastewater increases to minimize the impact on rate payers which he would be looking at.

He stated Items 17-20 all needed to be completed; along with Item 20 (Update of Ordinance No. 213A regarding City Organization, Administration and Personnel) as that ordinance was particularly out of date.

He noted that any perspective City Manager candidate would have commensurate skills necessary to achieve these tasks.

In regard to Item 23 regarding the development of a recreational master plan for the City, including a waterfront park and development, fishing access, boating access, trails, bicycle tourism and an adult softball facility, he stated there was a tremendous amount of work to develop such a plan, although it would be attainable.

Lastly, he said he talked to Merritt Perry regarding the last item, for completion of the 2002 Resources Bond Act application for \$220,000 for the Fireman's Park restroom and playground equipment project and he said he would be completing his report and bringing it back to the City Council.

Interim City Manager Stretch asked for comments or suggestions from the Council.

Councilmember Marks asked about the timing for a mid-year budget review, and asked the City Manager if he felt the Surplus Property Ordinance update was more important than update of the Employee Handbook and Drug Policy; City Manager Stretch stated he expected to have a mid-year budget review before arrival of the new City Manager and said he was in the process of working on a pre-employment and post incident drug policy.

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Councilmembers expressed concern about a smooth transition with the new City Manager. Interim Manager Stretch said he was vested here and would be available to help to insure a smooth transition.

Acting Director of Public Works Jensen then provided a review of his priority list related to public works projects and goals and said one of the biggest projects on the water side is the replacement of the water line on Monument Road and Old Ranch Road. He noted the public works department is out repairing leaks in that area on an average of two to three times a week. Another noted project would be to address drainage concerns on Ogle and Bellevue Ave. and explore funding options.

Councilmember Thompson suggested the City get a legal opinion on access and easement rights before proceeding with replacement of the water line on Monument and Old Ranch Road and pointed out that the issue of whether the City has legal access or not largely affects the value of the property and suggested this issue be added to the priority list for the Interim City Manager; Council concurred.

Finance Director Beauchaine stated that she had not yet prepared a written list of priorities for the Finance Department but noted that one primary goal was to increase the level of internal services and timeliness of financial reporting part of which would be to implement a new Budget module through AccuFund to eliminate the use of Excel. Also needed was the implementation of a Building/Planning module for improved coordination between those departments and the Finance Department. Other noted projects included update of department policies and procedures and revision of the CDBG tracking system.

Councilmember Marks asked if it would be prudent to bring in outside consultants to address some of these issues; Finance Director Beauchaine stated some tasks could be contracted out however many of the tasks are reoccurring and felt a better way to address it would be to augment staff.

Chief of Police Hill reviewed his list of short term goals for the Police Department that included tasks he determined to be achievable during the next twelve months. The following goals were identified:

- Complete background on two potential Police Officer candidates and hire by March 20, 2010
- Implement grant position for Problem Oriented Policing/Community Oriented Policing to address specific issues identified in the community that are not currently being addressed
- Develop a Crime Scene Technician from the current pool of employees to give the department the capability to more aggressively address property crimes, which through analysis has been identified as a weakness within the department

- Get potential Reserve Police Officer's through a background to determine qualifications and suitability to serve in that capacity
- Get the Police Department DRMO generator hooked up at City Hall
- Work with the Public Works Department to develop parking strategies on First and Second Avenue
- Develop a policy for river bar access at the end of Edwards Drive in anticipation of the approved gate being installed at that location
- Implement a training strategy to make officers more proficient in municipal codes
- Obtain the additional equipment necessary through DRMO to complete a Disaster Response Program which consists of a cargo box designed to go on the back of the department's large truck
- Fulfill management training goals

Mayor Woodall suggested training of the police dog be added as a goal.

The subject of community service arose; Chief Hill stated that community service workers are utilized in his department but there are limitations associated with how they are used due to security issues in the police department. Councilmember Dunker commented that high school students are required to perform a certain number of community services hours as an eligibility requirement for graduation and use of those students may be helpful.

Mayor Woodall stated it was a good idea to develop a priority list for the City Manager and asked Councilmembers if they would also like to establish a prioritized list for individual departments.

Councilmember Barsanti said he would like to see what goals have been accomplished over the next two months realizing that priorities often change on a daily basis.

Mayor Woodall commented that an appropriate time to review progress would be during the budget review process.

Interim City Manager Stretch stated for the City Council to have this kind of detail is a good thing whereas many agencies have a complete service review performed periodically or when a new council member comes on board which includes goals and objectives.

Chief of Police Hill said it was helpful for him to have a list that he can also share with other departments.

Interim City Manager Stretch said it may take augmentation of staff to accomplish all of the goals and objectives or actually a reduction in staff if the Council only wants to see a portion of those objectives met.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 P.M. to the March 2, 2010 Regular meeting.

Julie Woodall Mayor

ATTEST:

Karen Dunham, City Clerk